

gradually increasing to a fair breeze. Yet not at any time was there more than a fair summer breeze, though the gradual increase of the old swell running from the east told us of a storm not far ahead. We did not catch the storm, but learned, on reaching port, that steamers a few hours in advance had found rough weather. Both days were more or less foggy, the steam horn blowing on and off about half the time.

The fastest run up to 12 M. on May 8 was 582 miles. I regret that I am now unable to give exact position, but as we took a slightly more southerly course than is usual with the French line, it can easily be approximated.

On May 8, at 2 P. M., while watching some Petrels, I noticed a flock of Peeps on the port side, flying towards the steamer from the northwest. When within about 80 yards of us they turned to the east till they could pass our bows, then turned sharply, passing within a few yards, or even feet of us, and then off to the S. E. by E. I at once went to the upper deck to watch for more, and was surprised to find that, in every direction, as far as I could see in the then light fog, were large flocks of Peeps all flying in the same direction, S. E. by E. The birds were flying in large scattered flocks of from fifty to apparently several hundred birds. The flight lasted for nearly three hours, during which a very large number of birds must have passed us.

Why were they flying S. E. by E.? They should at that season have been bound for their northern breeding grounds and not for Africa.

There was not any evidence tending to show that the birds were lost, as all flew exactly the same way. Every flock that found our vessel in their line of flight, and of which there were not less than fifty, turned to the east till they could make by our bow, not one flock, or even a single bird, did I see turn to the westward to cross astern of us.

They were flying strong, easily passing our steamer, then making 12½ knots. Not one tried to alight, nor did any fall into the water, nor were any seen floating, though I watched carefully.

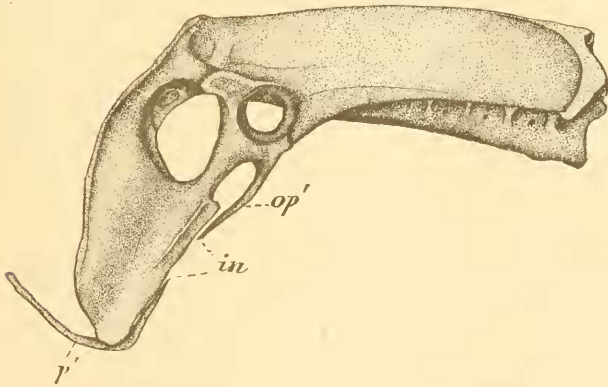
Whether the Peeps were *Tringa minutilla* or *Ereunetes pusillus* I can not say, but surely they were out of place and fast getting more so.—W. A. JEFFRIES, *Boston, Mass.*

On the Proper Name for the Prairie Hen.—Probably all ornithologists who have had the opportunity of investigating the matter, or who have carefully read Mr. Brewster's important article on 'The Heath Hen of Massachusetts' in 'The Auk' for January, 1885 (pp. 80-84), fully agree with Mr. Brewster in regard to the necessity of recognizing two species of the genus *Tympanuchus* (formerly *Cupidonia*), and indorse his restriction of the specific name *cupido* to the eastern bird. No other view of the case, in fact, seems admissible. In giving a new name to the western bird, however, Mr. Brewster has unfortunately overlooked a supposed synonym of *T. cupido*, which applies exclusively to the western species, as I have very recently discovered in compiling and verifying references pertaining to the two birds. The supposed synonym in ques-

tion is that of *Cupidonia americana* Reich. Syst. Av. 1850, p. xxix, based on figures 1896-98 of his 'Icones Avium' (Vollständ. Naturg. Huhnerv. Aves Gallinacæ). The two smaller of these three figures unquestionably represent the western Prairie Hen: the other, and principal figure, is a reduced copy from Wilson (American Ornithology, pl. 27, fig. 1), which, that author tells us, is "A figure of the male . . . as large as life, drawn with great care from the most perfect of several elegant specimens shot in the *Barrens of Kentucky*." (Italics my own.)

It is thus plain that the western Pinnated Grouse, or Prairie Hen, must be called *Tympanuchus americanus* (Reich.).—ROBERT RIDGWAY. *Washington, D. C.*

On the Free Post-pubis in certain of the Falconidæ.—Being engaged upon the osteology of the North American Falconidæ, and at present not very fortunately situated so far as the literature of my subject is concerned, I would like to ask some one of the many readers of 'The Auk,' to whom the larger anatomical works are more accessible, and who may be, at the same time, interested in the structure of birds, for the authority I must refer to, if, indeed, it has ever been described, for an account of the peculiar condition in which we find the post-pubic element of certain Hawks.



Right lateral view of the pelvis of *Buteo borealis calurus*, showing the free hinder portion of the post-pubic element (*p'*); *in*, the interval which occurs between it and the obturator portion (*op'*). Life size from the specimen.

As an example, we meet with the peculiarity in question, well displayed in the pelvis of the common Marsh Harrier, where we observe the hinder two-thirds of the post-pubis to be a separate piece of bone held in its usual position, as found in birds, by being freely suspended to the lower margin of the ischium by ligament. Between this free portion of the element, and that part which closes in the obturator foramen, quite an inter-